THE

New National Policy

As adopted by the Organized Farmers of Canada in

THE FARMERS' PLATFORM

drafted and issued by the

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE

At Winnipeg, on November 29, 1918

Canadian Council of Agriculture

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REACHING ACROSS CANADA

Story of the Canadian Council of Agriculture and the Farmers' Platform

For every responsible person of adult age, living in Canada, there are three fields of citizenship—the local municipality, the province and the Dominion. The organized farmers' movement in Canada, which has for its supreme object the establishment of good citizenship, is based upon the idea of usefulness within those three fields. The organized farmers have first, their local societies or clubs; secondly, their provincial associations, which embrace and co-ordinate the local organizations within each province; and thirdly, their Canadian Council of Agriculture, which represents the sphere of federal interests, and is composed of representatives from each of the provincial bodies. Thus it may be seen that the farmers' organizations coincide fairly closely with the popular and representative institutions of government in the country—the municipal council, the provincial legislature and the Dominion parliament. It is with the relationship of the farmers to the Dominion through their Council of Agriculture that this article is mainly concerned.

In December, 1909, at Toronto, on the occasion of the annual convention of the old Dominion Grange, which had been confined largely to Ontario, the Canadian Council of Agriculture was organized. Roderick McKenzie and E. A. Partridge, well-known Grain Growers from the West, attended the convention of the Grange in 1909 as delegates, and they drafted the constitution of the new Council of Agriculture. The first president of the Council was elected in the person of D. W. McCuaig, then president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, and the first secretary was E. C. Drury, now the Premier of Ontario. R. C. Henders, of Culross, Manitoba, succeeded Mr. McCuaig as president of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, and he was followed by James Bower, of Red Deer, Alberta, after whom came J. A. Maharg, of Moose

Jaw, Saskatchewan. In 1917, Mr. Maharg's place was taken by H. W. Wood, of Carstairs, Alberta, who still holds that office. Thus the presidents of the associations of the three Western provinces have had their turn in presiding over the affairs of this organization. The position of secretary, following the retirement of Mr. Drury, was held by E. J. Fream, of Calgary, until 1914, when Roderick McKenzie took the office, which he held up till July, 1918. N. P. Lambert then succeeded Mr. McKenzie to the secretaryship.

Re-organization in 1916

At the session of the Canadian Council of Agriculture in December, 1916, a certain amount of re-organization was effected in orde. that representatives of the different commercial companies which had arisen out of the farmers' movement should be admitted to its membership in addition to the representatives of the provincial associations. As a result of this enlargement in 1916, the Council was made up as follows: The executive officers of the United Farmers of Alberta, the Alberta Co-operative Elevator Company, The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, The Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, The Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, The Grain Growers' Grain Company, The Grain Growers' Guide, The United Farmers of Ontario and the United Farmers' Co-operative Company of Ontario, representing in all over 90,000 farmers who were affiliated with the different organizations at that time. It was also decided to establish the headquarters of the Canadian Council of Agriculture at Winnipeg, where they are still located.

Certain changes have occurred since 1916. In the first place, the Alberta Co-operative Elevator Company and the Grain Growers' Grain Company were amalgamated in 1917, and became known as The United Grain Growers, Limited, In the second place, the membership in 1916 provided for "not more than five" representatives from any Association or Company; and in 1918 that provision was changed, reducing the unit of representation to "not more than four." In July, 1919, however, the unit of representation was again made five

through the admission of one woman from each provincial association to the Council board. The most recent change in the membership of the Canadian Council of Agriculture has been the entrance of the United Farmers of New Brunswick, which came into existence in the Spring of 1918, and which during two years has had a most spirited growth.

First Big Undertaking

The first big undertaking with which the Canadian Council of Agriculture was identified was the famous Siege of Ottawa, when 800 farmers from Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta visited the Laurier Government in December, 1910, and demanded certain legislative reforms for the people of Canada.

When Sir Wilfred Laurier had visited the prairie provinces in the Summer of 1910 he had been met at every point by the organized Grain Growers, who demanded tariff reduction. Shortly afterward, *The Weekly Sun*, of Toronto, the organ of the Ontario farmers, suggested the advisability of sending a large delegation of farmers from all parts of Canada to Ottawa to lay their cause before Parliament. The suggestion was endorsed by *The Grain Growers' Guide*, the organ of the Western farmers. Other journals also advised the same idea, and it rapidly found favor throughout the Dominion, and finally was put into effect. No movement of the same character and magnitude had ever been seen before in Canada. In the following year the effect of the Siege of Ottawa was revealed when the Laurier Government declared itself in favor of reciprocity with the United States. That trade proposal suggested free trade in natural products and the reduction in the duty on agricultural implements. The demand of the farmers had been for entire free trade in agricultural machinery as well as free trade in natural products, and also a substantial increase in the "British Preference." The story of the election of 1911 is well known. The farmers lost out on that occasion, but the result served the very good purpose of strengthening their various organizations throughout Canada, and to-day the voice of the farming people is more influential than it has ever been since Confederation.

The Farmers' Platform

In 1916, when the headquarters of the Canadian Council of Agriculture were established in Winnipeg, steps were taken to construct a policy which was expressed later in the "Farmers' Platform." This platform, which was drafted by the Council, represented almost in its entirety resolutions which had been unanimously approved year after year for fifteen years by the annual conventions of the Grain Growers' Associations, and also latterly by the United Farmers of Ontario. The compiling of the original Farmers' Platform of 1916, therefore, was simply putting into codified form a series of long-standing recommendations for economic and social reforms as adopted by the organized farmers of the Prairie Provinces and of Ontario. The "Farmers' Platform," after being drafted in December, 1916, by the Canadian Council of Agriculture was adopted later by the annual conventions of the United Farmers of Alberta, The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, The Manitoba Grain Growers' Association and the United Farmers of Ontario. In the Summer of 1917, following the unanimous endorsation by all the farmers' organizations, the Farmers' Platform, together with a somewhat lengthy elaboration of its different planks, was issued to the public in booklet form.

Then came the end of the war, with attendant problems and plans of reconstruction. The Canadian Council of Agriculture between the Summer of 1917 and the Autumn of 1918 had seen several of the recommendations in the Farmers' Platform put into effect, such as woman suffrage, prohibition, measures of direct taxation on incomes and business profits, and legislation directed against the patronage evil. The time was opportune in the Autumn of 1918, therefore, for revising the Farmers' Platform in order that it should be brought up to date, and at the same time give consideration to an after-war policy for Canada. Accordingly, in November, 1918, the present Farmers' Platform, with new features bearing upon national status, the returned soldier, labor, and such questions as the War-Time Elections Act, Order-in-Council government, titles, freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and proportional

representation, was issued by the Council of Agriculture, and was described as a New National Policy for Canada, in contrast with the old National Policy of 1879. This revised platform, appearing when it did, seemed to strike the mind of the whole country with extraordinary force. At the annual conventions of the organized farmers during the winter of 1919 it was unanimously adopted, and in addition a unanimous demand for independent political action to put it into effect was made by each provincial organization. In the parliament at Ottawa this New National Policy, promulgated by the organized farmers, was placed on Hansard at least twice by members of the House.

Political Action

When the Canadian Council of Agriculture issued the draft copy of its platform in November, 1918, there was little or no expectation that on the strength of it a demand for direct political action would be made by the different farmers' associations at their annual conventions. The first clause in the constitution of the Council of Agriculture reads as follows: "To encourage the farm population of the Dominion to organize for the study of educational, economic, social and political problems having a bearing upon the happiness and material prosperity of the people." In the spirit of that clause, the draft of the Farmers' Platform was issued—to develop an intelligent, well-formed electorate rather than to create a political party. But the demand from the people who in reality had evolved the main planks of the platform from year to year for more than fifteen years, was irresistible. The delegates at their annual conventions in 1919 with united voice declared that they had waited long enough upon the two old parties to give them needed reforms. If the measures advocated in the Farmers' Platform were to be realized at all, it was felt that steps must be taken to launch a new party which would be free from old centralized autocratic influences, and whose elected representatives in parliament would stand uncompromisingly by the New National Policy. The resignation of Hon. T. A. Crerar from the Union Government gave an added stimulus both to the Farmers' Platform and

to the political movement arising out of it. Twelve members of parliament, all from the West, followed Mr. Crerar in taking an independent attitude both toward the Government and the Opposition in parliament, and this group openly avowed its support of the platform issued by the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

During the Summer of 1919 political activities in all three prairie provinces were keen. Under the auspices of their provincial associations, the organized farmers held conventions in nearly every federal district, and deliberately set up machinery to carry on their part in the next general election. In Ontario, during the Summer months, the farmers were busily engaged waging their successful campaign in the provincial political field. But notwithstanding that fact, the United Farmers of Ontario were able to elect Mr. Kennedy in Stormount-Glengarry and Mr. Halbert in North Ontario, to the Dominion parliament, in the federal by-elections of last Autumn. At the same time, in Assiniboia, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers elected Mr. Gould, and in Carleton, the United Farmers of New Brunswick elected Mr. Caldwell. These four victories in behalf of the New National Policy on which all four candidates fought their elections, gave still more importance to the independent group in the House of Commons, now increased to sixteen. The next event promises to be a general election, and it remains to be seen how far the New National Policy advocated in the Farmers' Platform can influence the whole Canadian electorate. In the meantime, organization and educational work to promote and consolidate opinion behind the New National Policy are gradually enveloping five provinces, and radiating an influence over the other four.

A word should be said as to the intent of the organized farmers in connection with their platform. In the first place, the opinion has been strongly held by the leaders of the farmers' movement for years that Canada's basic industry, agriculture, has not been justly dealt with in the federal legislation of this country during the past four decades. In 1916, when the first Farmers' Platform was

drafted, it was designed with that conviction. It was designed also in the belief that such a policy as that advocated by the Canadian Council of Agriculture would place the country on an economic, political and social basis that would be in the interest not only of farmers, but of the citizens of Canada generally. The members of the Canadian Council of Agriculture realized then, as they do now, that the wage-earners, artizans, professional men and tradespeople are affected equally with the agricultural classes by the fiscal system which prevails in Canada, and they are just as much involved as the farmer in economic and social reforms. Because the organized farmers have initiated and promoted a federal programme of reform which they believe will benefit the Dominion as a whole, they have been accused of endeavoring to create class conflict, and to gain selfish ends through class legislation. Such a charge is entirely wrong and unjust, as the most cursory glance at the text of the Farmers' Platform will prove.

Commercial Activities

In addition to promoting an interest in progressive legislation through its educational work, the Canadian Council of Agriculture also endeavors to attend to the farmers' commercial and material interests wherever they are affected by developments within the Dominion field of legislation, or wherever by co-operating with other organizations or agencies agricultural conditions may be improved.

A worthy development in the relationship of the Canadian Council of Agriculture with the interests of the country at large occurred in March 7, 8 and 9, in the year 1916. In the previous November a proposal was made to establish "A Joint Committee of Commerce and Agriculture," to be composed of representatives of the business interests of the Western provinces and representatives of the organized farmers' associations. The object of the organization, expressed in broad terms, was to bring the Western farming and business interests together from time to time to discuss problems affecting their mutual welfare, "in order that in matters where an agreement of opinion is reached, joint action might

be taken to further a solution." It was arranged to limit the total representation on the committee to 40, 20 from each side. The first meeting of the committee was held in Winnipeg in March, 1916, and the number of representatives was then increased to 50, or 25 from each side. The discussions centred mainly around the subjects of mortgage loans and banking credits, and largely as a result of the better understanding which developed out of the first conference, several beneficial changes were made by the banks in their system of dealing with the Western farmers.

Upon the outbreak of the war, and particularly after the federal government took action in controlling the prices of foodstuffs, the Canadian Council of Agriculture occupied a very important position. It was called upon to deliberate in such important matters as the fixing of the price of wheat and the disposition of supplies of flour and grain to the allied countries overseas. It is safe to say that in the fixing of wheat prices at a reasonable level, the influence of the Canadian Council of Agriculture was responsible for securing a greater return to the farmer than he would have received if that influence had been absent in the negotiations with the Government. In amendments to the Grain Act, in the case of the livestock contract with the railways before the Board of Railway Commissioners, in protesting against the regulations of the Board of Commerce, and in dealing with freight rate cases before the Railway Board, the different committees of the Canadian Council of Agriculture have served the interests of the farmer well.

The future of the Canadian Council of Agriculture is as broad and certain as that of the country itself. Its aim is to represent thoroughly established farmers' organizations in every province of the Dominion. At the present time the prairie agricultural provinces, Ontario and New Brunswick are included in this central organization, which now represents over 150,000 farmers. The farmers of British Columbia, who organized themselves into an association in 1917, have approached the Council of Agriculture for membership. The farmers of

New Brunswick have just become affiliated and have yet to attend their first meeting of the Council. Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have still to affiliate themselves, and before long it is hoped that from the Atlantic to the Pacific one strong chain of agricultural organizations will be bound together through the influence of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

Winnipeg, March, 1920.

THE FARMERS' PLATFORM

Following herewith is the Official Text of the Farmers' Platform

1. A League of Nations as an international organization to give permanence to the world's peace by removing old causes of conflict.

2. We believe that the further development of the British Empire should be sought along the lines of partnership between nations free and equal, under the present governmental system of British constitutional authority. We are strongly opposed to any attempt to centralize imperial control. Any attempt to set up an independent authority with power to bind the Dominions, whether this authority be termed parliament, council or cabinet, would hamper the growth of responsible and informed democracy in the Dominions.

The Tariff

3. Whereas Canada is now confronted with a huge national war debt and other greatly increased financial obligations, which can be most readily and effectively reduced by the development of our natural resources, chief of which is agricultural lands;

And whereas it is desirable that an agricultural career should be made attractive to our returned soldiers and the large anticipated immigration, and owing to the fact that this can best be accomplished by the development of a national policy which will reduce to a minimum the cost of living and the cost of production;

And whereas the war has revealed the amazing financial strength of Great Britain, which has enabled her to finance, not only her own part in the struggle, but also to assist in financing her Allies to the extent of hundreds of millions of pounds, this enviable position being due to the free trade policy which has enabled her to draw her supplies freely from every quarter of the globe and consequently to undersell her competitors on the world's market, and because this policy has not only been profitable to Great Britain, but has

greatly strengthened the bonds of Empire by facilitating trade between the Motherland and her overseas Dominions—we believe that the best interests of the Empire and of Canada would be served by reciprocal action on the part of Canada through gradual reductions of the tariff on British imports, having for its objects closer union and a better understanding between Canada and the Motherland and at the same time bring about a great reduction in the cost of living to our Canadian people;

Fosters Combines

And whereas the Protective Tariff has fostered combines, trusts and "gentlemen's agreements" in almost every line of Canadian industrial enterprise, by means of which the people of Canada—both urban and rural—have been shamefully exploited through the elimination of competition, the ruination of many of our smaller industries and the advancement of prices on practically all manufactured goods to the full extent permitted by the tariff;

And whereas agriculture—the basic industry upon which the success of all our other industries primarily depends—is unduly handicapped throughout Canada as shown by the declining rural population in both Eastern and Western Canada, due largely to the greatly increased cost of agricultural implements and machinery, clothing, boots and shoes, building material and practically everything the farmer has to buy, caused by the Protective Tariff, so that it is becoming impossible for farmers generally, under normal conditions, to carry on farming operations profitably;

And whereas the Protective Tariff is the most wasteful and costly method ever designed for raising national revenue, because for every dollar obtained thereby for the public treasury at least three dollars pass into the pockets of the protected interests, thereby building up a privileged class at the expense of the masses, thus making the rich richer and the poor poorer;

And whereas the Protective Tariff has been and is a chief corrupting influence in our national life because the protected interests, in order to maintain

their unjust privileges, have contributed lavishly to political and campaign funds, thus encouraging both political parties to look to them for support, thereby lowering the standard of public morality.

Definite Tariff Demands

Therefore be it resolved that the Canadian Council of Agriculture, representing the organized farmers of Canada, urges that, as a means of remedying these evils and bringing about much-needed social and economic reforms, our tariff laws should be amended as follows:

(*a*) By an immediate and substantial all-round reduction of the customs tariff.

(*b*) By reducing the customs duty on goods imported from Great Britain to one-half the rates charged under the general tariff, and that further gradual, uniform reductions be made in the remaining tariff on British imports that will ensure complete Free Trade between Great Britain and Canada in five years.

(*c*) By endeavoring to secure unrestricted reciprocal trade in natural products with the United States along the lines of the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911.

(*d*) By placing all foodstuffs on the free list.

(*e*) That agricultural implements, farm and household machinery, vehicles, fertilizers, coal, lumber, cement, gasoline, illuminating, fuel and lubricating oils be placed on the free list, and that all raw materials and machinery used in their manufacture also be placed on the free list.

(*f*) That all tariff concessions granted to other countries be immediately extended to Great Britain.

(*g*) That all corporations engaged in the manufacture of products protected by the customs tariff be obliged to publish annually comprehensive and accurate statements of their earnings.

(*h*) That every claim for tariff protection by any industry should be heard publicly before a special committee of parliament.

Taxation Proposals

4. As these tariff reductions may very considerably reduce the national revenue from that source, the Canadian Council of Agriculture would recommend that, in order to provide the necessary

additional revenue for carrying on the government of the country and for the bearing of the cost of the war, direct taxation be imposed in the following manner:

(*a*) By a direct tax on unimproved land values, including all natural resources.

(*b*) By a graduated personal income tax.

(*c*) By a graduated inheritance tax on large estates.

(*d*) By a graduated income tax on the profits of corporations.

(*e*) That in levying and collecting the business profits tax the Dominion Government should insist that it be absolutely upon the basis of the actual cash invested in the business and that no considerations be allowed for what is popularly known as watered stock.

(*f*) That no more natural resources be alienated from the crown, but brought into use only under short-term leases, in which the interests of the public shall be properly safeguarded, such leases to be granted only by public auction.

The Returned Soldiers

5. With regard to the returned soldier we urge:

(*a*) That it is the recognized duty of Canada to exercise all due diligence for the future well-being of the returned soldier and his dependants.

(*b*) That demobilization should take place only after return to Canada.

(*c*) That first selection for return and demobilization should be made in the order of length of service of those who have definite occupation awaiting them or have other assured means of support, preference being given first to married men and then to the relative need of industries, with care to insure so far as possible the discharge of farmers in time for the opening of spring work upon the land.

(*d*) That general demobilization should be gradual, aiming at the discharge of men only as it is found possible to secure steady employment.

(*e*) It is highly desirable that if physically fit discharged men should endeavor to return to their former occupations, and employers should be urged

to reinstate such men in their former positions wherever possible.

(*f*) That vocational training should be provided for those who while in the service have become unfitted for their former occupations.

(*g*) That provision should be made for insurance at the public expense of unpensioned men who have become undesirable insurance risks while in the service.

(*h*) That facilities should be provided at the public expense that will enable returned soldiers to settle upon farming land when by training or experience they are qualified to do so.

6. We recognize the very serious problem confronting labor in urban industry resulting from the cessation of war, and we urge that every means, economically, feasible and practicable, should be used by federal, provincial and municipal authorities in relieving unemployment in the cities and towns; and, further, recommend the adoption of the principle of co-operation as the guiding spirit in the future relations between employer and employees—between capital and labor.

Land Settlement

7. A land settlement scheme based on a regulating influence in the selling price of land. Owners of idle areas should be obliged to file a selling price on their lands, that price also to be regarded as an assessable value for purposes of taxation.

8. Extension of co-operative agencies in agriculture to cover the whole field of marketing, including arrangements with consumers' societies for the supplying of foodstuffs at the lowest rates and with the minimum of middleman handling.

9. Public ownership and control of railway, water and aerial transportation, telephone, telegraph and express systems, all projects in the development of natural power, and of the coal mining industry.

Other Democratic Reforms

10. To bring about a greater measure of democracy in government, we recommend:

(*a*) That the new Dominion Election Act shall be based upon the principle of establishing the federal electorate on the provincial franchise.

(*b*) The discontinuance of the practice of conferring titles upon citizens of Canada.

(*c*) The reform of the federal senate.

(*d*) An immediate check upon the growth of government by order-in-council, and increased responsibility of individual members of parliament in all legislation.

(*e*) The complete abolition of the patronage system.

(*f*) The publication of contributions and expenditures both before and after election campaigns.

(*g*) The removal of press censorship upon the restoration of peace and the immediate restoration of the rights of free speech.

(*h*) The setting forth by daily newspapers and periodical publications, of the facts of their ownership and control.

(*i*) Proportional representation.

(*j*) The establishment of measures of direct legislation through the initiative, referendum and recall.

(*k*) The opening of seats in parliament to women on the same terms as men.

(*l*) Prohibition of the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquors as beverages in Canada.

Note.—A plank under Section 10, reading: "A Naturalization Act based upon personal naturalization only," was suggested by the Canadian Council of Agriculture, and was approved by all the provincial associations except the United Farmers of Alberta, which voted to lay this plank "on the table."